



# **Anthropology and Colonialism in Asia: Comparative and Historical Colonialism (Anthropology of Asia)**

*Jan van Bremen, Akitoshi Shimizu*

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For a time it was almost a cliché to say that anthropology was a handmaiden of colonialism - by which was usually meant 'Western' colonialism. And this insinuation was assumed to somehow weaken the theoretical claims of anthropology and its fieldwork achievements.

What this collection demonstrates is that colonialism was not only a Western phenomenon, but 'Eastern' as well. And that Japanese or Chinese anthropologists were also engaged in studying subject peoples.

But wherever they were and whoever they were anthropologists always had a complex and problematic relationship with the colonial state. The latter saw some anthropologists' sympathy for 'the natives' as a threat, while on the other hand anthropological knowledge was used for the training of colonial officials.

The impact of the colonial situation on the formation of anthropological theories is an important if not easily answered question, and the comparison of experiences in Asia offered in this book further helps to illuminate this complex relationship.

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